

**Minutes
Commonwealth of Virginia
State Board of Social Services
Dumas Center for Artistic & Cultural Development in Roanoke
108 First Street
Roanoke, VA
April 16-17, 2008**

Attendees

Nettie Simon-Owens, Peppy Linden, Maggi Luca, Trudy Brisendine, Brenda Hornsby, Shirley Culpepper, Bela Sood, and Marilyn Rigby

Absent

Danny Brown-Wednesday morning

Call to Order

The full Board meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairperson Nettie Simon-Owens (following the Poverty Committee Meeting).

At noon today, the Board will participate in a few moments of silence to recognize the one-year anniversary of the Virginia Tech tragedy.

Ms. Simon-Owens recognized Usha Kuduro, representing the Office of the Attorney General. Condolences were offered to Assistant Commissioner Margaret Schultze on the passing of her aunt and to Eddie Harrison on the passing of his father. It was also advised that Mr. Brown would arrive late due to a previous commitment.

Welcome and Introductions

Ted Edlich, President of Total Action Against Poverty in Roanoke, welcomed the Board to Roanoke.

The Honorable Judge Philip Trompeter, Roanoke County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court welcomed the Board to Roanoke.

Councilman Sherman Lea welcomed members to Roanoke.

Tony Fritz, Director of the Western Region, welcomed the Board to Roanoke.

Jane Conlin, Director of Roanoke City Department of Social Services, welcomed members and introduced staff present.

Review of Agenda

Richard Martin, Manager of the Office of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs reviewed the meeting agenda.

Information Items

Regulation Status Report

Richard Martin reviewed the Regulation Status Report with members. Handouts were provided with copies attached to the official minutes housed in the home office. Mr. Martin advised that 22VAC 40-25 Auxiliary Grant Program-Levels of Care and Rate Setting regulation will come before the Board in June as a fast track action item.

He also reported that 22VAC 40-191 Background Checks for Child Welfare agencies is receiving comment on the Periodic Review through May 5 and will come before the Board at their June meeting.

22 VAC 40-11 Public Participation Guidelines is pending at Department of Planning and Budget.

22 VAC 40-201 Permanency Services regulation –public comment has ended and will be before the Board at their August meeting.

22 VAC 40-705 Child Protective Services regulation is at the proposed state. This regulation will be published after signed by the Governor. It should be in place by March 31, 2009.

22 VAC 40-35 Virginia Independence Program regulation is pending in the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources.

Mr. Martin shared a letter from Judy McGreal, Program Development consultant in the Division of Licensing regarding the ALF Advisory Committee Meeting. The meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 7 from 1-4 PM at the VDSS office in Richmond. Members were assured that interested parties were also advised of this information. Ms. Brisendine had questions regarding the medication certification training and Ms. Hornsby asked for more insight on the proposed changes. Mr. Martin will ensure this information is available to members prior to the June meeting. Members were advised to contact Ms. McGreal regarding their concerns.

All questions regarding regulations should be directed to Mr. Martin at 804.726.7902.

The Chair thanked Mr. Martin for expanding the depth and detail of the regulation report.

Annual Child Fatality Report

Rita Katzman, CPS Manager reviewed the handout entitled *Report on Child Deaths Due to Abuse or Neglect in Virginia during fiscal year 2007*. The report recommends goals to promote interagency partnership to prevent child fatalities due to child abuse and neglect and reduce child maltreatment fatalities among infants and young children. A copy was provided to members with a copy attached to the official minutes housed in the home office.

CPS Out-of-Family Report

Rita Katzman advised this report addresses a request from the State Board of Social Services for additional information about unfounded Child Protective Services investigations of public school employees to assess the impact of amendments to §63.2-1511 of the Code of Virginia on child safety and services. The legislation established additional requirements to validate a report in public school settings. Further, the local department of social services must determine that the evidence supporting a founded disposition also meets either willful misconduct or gross negligence standards. This report was also to identify if there were any new issues for the Out-of-Family Advisory Committee to explore. A copy of this report was provided to members with a copy attached to the official minutes housed in the home office. The next meeting of the CPS Out-of-Family Advisory Group will be held on May 20 at the Petersburg Dept. of Social Services.

Ms. Katzman reminded the Board that April is designated Prevent Child Abuse Month.

Ms. Linden mentioned that the Board previously heard about Structured Decision Making (SDM) and how well it is working. She asked if this program will be expanded to all localities in the near future.

Commissioner Conyers reminded the Board that SDM works; however, it is more time-consuming and with the system stressed due to staffing issues, not all localities feel they can afford to do SDM.

Ms. Brisendine suggested taking the statistics before the General Assembly next year to show that SDM works and request additional funding for localities.

Ms. Katzman advised she supports SMD as a decision-making tool for workers.

(Moment of silence for victims of the Virginia Tech tragedy)

Comment Period

Public-None

Local Boards and Directors of Social Services-None

(Acknowledged Susan Clark from Galax, Carl Ayers from Floyd, and Larry Lindsay-Asst. Director from Montgomery.)

Virginia League of Social Service Executives

Susan Clark, Co-Chair of the League welcomed the Board to Roanoke. She advised the next VLSSE conference will be held May 6,7,8 in Hampton. She will forward registration information to the Board. Elections will be held: Sarah Snead is running unopposed for President.

CSA: There is a big concern over the change in reimbursement. Localities received a reduction in aid notification-CSA was also on the list. This is a major issue and will impact local DSS agencies in their ability to do their jobs.

Agency Consolidation: This issue has been addressed several times in the past years. VDSS is charged with completing a General Assembly Study on this issue. CODE allows agencies with a 20,000 population or less to be consolidated. VLSSE stands ready to assist the department with this study.

Thanks to Richard Martin for attending the VLSSE weekly legislative meetings.

Ms. Clark spoke about the concern Board members felt that local directors were not attending their meetings. It was reported that local board meetings take place on the 3rd Wednesday of every month and conflicts with Board meeting schedule.

Virginia Community Action Program

Due to a scheduling conflict, Jim Schuyler was unable to attend the meeting. A written report was shared with members and a copy attached to the official minutes housed in the home office.

First, let me bring you up to date on the state budget and funding for community action expansion. As I indicated at your December 2007 meeting, additional funding for community action expansion was our highest legislative priority. Despite bi-partisan support for a budget amendment to increase funding by \$1.6 million for FY 2009, which we believe would have accommodated all of the requests for designations by existing and new agencies for FY 2009, no additional funding was provided in the budget passed by the General Assembly. Therefore, the budget includes language intended to maintain the current funding level for existing agencies.

This language states that the Governor shall not designate a new or existing agency to serve an unserved locality unless the Secretary of Health and Human Resources certifies that “sufficient funding” is available for such agency “without adversely affecting funding for existing community action agencies”. We will be working with Commissioner Conyers and Secretary Tavenner to implement this “hold harmless” provision. We plan to seek additional funding for FY2010 so that the expansion process will continue until we serve each locality in Virginia. There are already a number of resolutions from localities seeking designation of community action agencies that have been submitted to VDSS and Secretary Tavenner. Given the very tight budget situation this year, this was unfortunately the “best” result for difficult times. If new agencies were designated for FY 2009 without additional dollars, existing community action agencies would have suffered reductions of over 10 percent from the current funding level.

Second, although the numbers are changing daily, I will give you the latest news of an outstanding tax season for the VACAP EITC Coalitions. With about a week left before April 15, coalitions continue to very busy with last-minute filers. Volunteers have learned to adapt to customers who have not filed tax returns in many years requesting assistance with their Economic Stimulus Payments. Coalitions have met this challenge extremely well, and have assisted with thousands of additional returns. One site manager told us, “We are in the process of completing 270 stimulus returns for nursing home residents, saving the residents thousands of dollars in fees. The ability to do this service for the community has made the headache of stimulus returns worth it all!”

VACAP is a charter member of the Virginia News Connection, a news service for non-profits that has featured three stories this filing season on free tax preparation and the Economic Stimulus Payment. These stories have been broadcast hundreds of times on radio stations throughout Virginia. Carolyn Spohrer, EITC Project Manager, continues education and outreach on free tax preparation and asset building. An April 1 tutorial outlined how HUD Neighborhood Networks may link with free tax preparation programs. Upcoming presentations include the Virginia Conference on Volunteerism and Community Service and a workshop on Virginia Individual Development Accounts (VIDA) at the VACAP June Conference.

As of April 4, twenty-five coalitions from the Virginia CASH Campaign have provided free tax preparation assistance:

- Number of Federal returns: 11,523
- Total refunds: \$12.2 million
- Average refund: \$1050
- Tax preparation savings: \$2.3 million (about \$200/return)
- EITC returns: 3,500
- Total EITC refunds: \$5.1 million
- Average EITC refund: \$1500
- State returns: 10,000
- State refunds: \$1.5 million

We expect our total activity to exceed the 2006 tax year, and some of our coalitions, including newer groups, have had impressive increases in activity this year. We will have statistics on “paper” economic stimulus returns that will be separately counted from our “regular” free income tax preparation and EITC returns. There is no question that there are opportunities for continuing growth in activity of free tax preparation in future years.

Third, I reported to you in December about our exciting new PIE Initiative—Public Information Exchange—using our federal Training and Technical Assistance and Capacity Building funds to develop the network’s capacity to operate with dynamic and content-valuable websites. The PIE initiative includes an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed which provides current news to all subscribers, and we are offering web and e-mail hosting for members. Please check out the first website we have developed, working with Skyline CAP-- www.skylinecap.org . The new Skyline website uses a template developed by VACAP and includes the VACAP news feature, a real-time syndication news service which automatically updates the website. We look forward to using the PIE initiative to provide websites and spam-filtered e-mail services to all community action agencies interested in these services.

Finally, please visit the redesigned VACAP website www.vacap.org , which includes a number of resources of value to the State Board and its Poverty Committee: a link to Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity, a website developed by a consortium of foundations to promote poverty issues in the Presidential campaign; National Center for Children in Poverty data specific to Virginia, and the latest statistics from the National Low Income Housing Coalition’s “Out of Reach” Report with data specific to Virginia. Please let me know whether the data and information on our website are worthwhile, and if there is anything else we might include that may be helpful to your important work.

I am meeting with other organizations interested in exploring the possibility of developing a Virginia Anti-Hunger Coalition. This effort is being spearheaded by the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy. I will report to you in the future if there is further action in this area.

Commissioner Remarks

Commissioner Anthony Conyers, Jr., advised he continues to work with the First Lady of Virginia on the For Keeps Initiative and with the Governor's Human Service priorities.

He advised that Governor Timothy M. Kaine announced the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, which will be headed by Kathy Glazer. She will report to the Department of Education and the Department of Social Services (Commissioner Conyers and Bill Cannady, Superintendent of Instruction). The Office of Early Childhood Development will work to expand access to and coordinate Virginia's system of high-quality early childhood development programs - birth to age five - providing a seamless continuum of services and education to Virginia's neediest children and their families.

He advised that due to nearly half of the leadership team being eligible for full or early retirement, the department is taking appropriate steps now to thoroughly transfer programmatic expertise and guidance to a new generation of social service leaders. He further advised we have an excellent opportunity with the Division of Family Services by recruiting for a new DFS Director. Following selection of the candidate, Lynette Isbell will assume direct responsibility for working with the Division of Information Systems to ensure that the technical application developed for Child Welfare is functional and user-friendly. He foresees a number of changes to our approach to ChildWINS and it is critical to have someone focusing on customer needs day in and day out. Lynette's thorough knowledge of the agency and local departments will help our technical team better understand the needs of our program staff.

He advised that one of the most critical and sensitive assignments we face this year will be the Consolidation Study mandated by the General Assembly. The department will rely on Ms. Isbell's collaborative skills and historical perspective to see the project through to completion. She will also prepare for and complete a CFSR in 2009 as well as mentoring the new DFS director.

Action Items

Approval of Minutes

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Luca) and seconded (Ms. Sood) moved to approve the Minutes as presented. Motion carried with all in favor.

DSS Office Services Support Employee Appreciation Month Resolution

On behalf of the Partnership of Office Services Support Employees in Social Services (POSSESS), Board Secretary Peppy Linden read their Resolution before the Board and asked for approval.

Discussion: None

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Brown) and seconded (Ms. Rigby) moved to approve the DSS Office Service Support Employee Appreciation Resolution recognizing the month of April 2008 as Office Services Support Employee Appreciation Month. Motion carried with all in favor.

Records Retention Guidance for Local Departments of Social Services

Mr. Martin advised that further consideration needed to be given to this issue. He asked, and the Board agreed, to withdraw action until their June meeting.

22 VAC 40-411, General Relief Program

Proposed Regulation

This action will establish 22 VAC 40-411, General Relief Program, and repeal three current regulations: 22 VAC 40-410, Entitlement Date in the General Relief Program; 22 VAC 40-570, General Relief Program-Locality Options; and 22 VAC 40-640, General Relief Program-Deeming Income from Alien Sponsors. The new regulation will provide one comprehensive regulation for the General Relief Program.

Discussion: It was verified that this will lump all the regulations together in one regulation without any changes to content. There will be one body of rules to follow now.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Brown) and seconded (Ms. Hornsby) moved to approve the proposed regulatory package to establish 22 VAC 40-411, General Relief Program, and the repeal of 22 VAC 40-410, Entitlement Date in the General Relief Program; 22 VAC 40-570, General Relief Program-Locality Options; and 22 VAC 40-640, General Relief Program-Deeming Income from Alien Sponsors for publication in the Virginia Register subject to approval under the provisions of Executive Order 36 (2006) and approve the fiscal impact analysis of this action for distribution to local boards of social services pursuant to §63.2-217 of the Code of Virginia. Motion carried with all in favor.

22 VAC 40-630, Disability Advocacy Project

Periodic Review and Notice of Intended Regulatory Action

This action will complete the periodic review of this regulation as required by §2.2-4017 and Executive Order 36 (2006). Currently, there are multiple regulations governing the General Relief Program. The regulations define the different types of assistance available, how income and resources are determined, and the process of determining eligibility. This regulation will be repealed and its provisions included in the new comprehensive regulation 22 VAC 40-411, General Relief Program.

Discussion: None

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Brisendine) and seconded (Ms. Sood) moved to approve the Periodic Review report for submission to the Department of Planning and Budget and the Secretary of Health and Human Resources as required by the provisions of Executive Order Number 36 (2006). Motion carried with all in favor.

22 VAC 40-690, Virginia Child Care Provider Scholarship Program

Final Regulation

This action will amend regulation 22 VAC 40-690, Virginia Child Care Provider Scholarship Program. The revised regulation governs the provision of financial assistance to child care providers attending child care development and administration courses at Virginia's institutions of high education.

Discussion: VDSS will remain the point of contact for submitting applications-just changing the mailing address per Mr. Martin.

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Brown) and seconded (Ms. Hornsby) moved to approve the final regulatory package to amend 22 VAC 40-690, Virginia Child Care Provider Scholarship Program for publication in the Virginia Register subject to approval under the provisions of Executive Order Number 36 (2006). Motion carried with all in favor.

Legislative Update and Legislative Implementation Plans

Richard Martin provided members with a copy of the legislative update and reviewed areas of concern. Mr. Martin will forward a draft of the Public Participation Guidelines to the Board. Members were asked to contact him this weekend to ensure he has time to contact Melanie West on Monday morning with their concerns.

Committee Reports

Nominating Committee

Marilyn Rigby, Chair advised members to contact her if they were interested in serving as an officer for 2008-09. The slate will be presented for vote at the June meeting.

Poverty Committee

Trudy Brisendine, Chair provided an update on the Poverty Committee Meeting that was held on Wednesday morning. The committee continued their conservation on EITC and results on the “push” to get information out will be available by summer.

It was reported that Marianne McGhee has additional EITC Podcast material available for use next year. The list of upcoming Podcast possibilities included moving up Transportation to April or May due to the high cost of fuel. Food Cost was also reviewed as a possible Podcast. Ms. Brisendine advised that Mr. Schuyler and his group are meeting with the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy on the issue of hunger and VDSS may want to investigate opportunities to work collaboratively with the group on this critical issue.

Commissioner Conyers would like the SBSS to encourage people to live a week in the budget life of a food stamp recipient. It was also advised this could be expanded to include the 120 local directors and have them contact people in their respective areas to participate. Each area could contact the local media for maximum publicity. Commissioner will have Marianne McGhee work up a proposal and present it at the June meeting.

Ms. Margaret Schultze provided members with an update on Podcast. Members were asked to review this information and be prepared to discuss it at Thursday’s meeting.

Unfinished Business

SBSS Resource Center Website

Richard Martin advised this site contains reports, studies, etc. for Board use. There was much discussion as to what should be contained on this site. Members wanted to ensure this site did not contain too much information and then become dysfunctional. Ms. Rigby reminded the members that as we grow and develop other committees, we need to keep the Department’s Mission Plan in site so we can move in a supportive role of the vision to support outcomes.

The Chair reminded members to send their bio to Ms. Rengnerth. Please keep it to 100 words or less.

Future Meeting Schedule

June 18-19, Winchester LDSS hosting

August 20-21, Montgomery LDSS hosting

October 15-16, Norfolk LDSS hosting

December 10-11, Prince Edward LDSS hosting

Recess 5:03 p.m. to reception hosted by TAP agency.

Thursday, April 17, 2009
Reconvene 9:00 a.m.

Information Items

***Total Action Against Poverty in Roanoke
Initiatives and Tour of Facilities***

Cleo Sims, TAP Community Liaison Officer provided a brief video to members prior to their facility tours.

Roanoke City Department of Social Services

Jane Conlin introduced department staff and reviewed the city of Roanoke organizational culture model.

Ms. Sabra Bratton, Benefit Program Supervisor spoke to the Board on growing up during the culture change of the 1960s. Her presentation received a round of applause from members and attendees.

New Business

Agenda items for future meetings were discussed.

Ms. Rigby would like clarification on the state supervised and locally administered system.

Ms. Sood would like to hear from the local workers that deal with clients on a daily basis. She would like to hear best/worst case scenarios of challenges they face.

Ms. Linden would like to revisit the relationship between the department's Goals and Strategic Plan to that of the Board. She would also like to be kept abreast of the For Keeps effort with a report at each meeting.

Ms. Luca asked to be kept updated on the Children's Family Services Review and update on the child development classes offered in the catalog—are these beneficial to providers?

Ms. Brisendine spoke about contracting for prevention services in different localities. What is being done in different localities and have the results been valuable?

Update

There were no further questions on the Podcast information disseminated by Ms. Schultze on Wednesday.

Ms. Simon-Owens asked Ms. Hornsby and Ms. Linden to work as a committee to consider the webpage concept and bring their recommendations to the June meeting. The Board will decide as a whole on these recommendations.

Board Member Comments

Special thanks to William Penn for all his assistance with Board member needs during this meeting. Appreciation was also provided to TAP for the welcoming bag of goodies, morning and afternoon refreshments, lunch and a beautiful reception. This has been an inspiring meeting. Thanks were given Pat Rengnerth, Margaret Schultze, Richard Martin, and Commissioner Conyers for their continued support to the Board.

Ms. Schultze advised there will be a Family Children's Trust Fund meeting on June 23 in Richmond if members would like to attend. She will send them information via Ms. Rengnerth.

Mr. Martin advised we should take a "wait and see" approach to changing the Board meeting date that is in conflict with local board meetings. The December meeting is being held a week earlier this year and will not be in conflict.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Pat Rengnerth